

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE YELLOW FLAG.

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CHAPTER V. A LITTLE PARADISE.

THE place which Alice Claxton called her home, of which she was sole mistress, and which she dearly loved, was situate at Hendon. An old-fashioned, dreamy, by-gone kind of village, which, in these latter days, the Midland Railway has discovered to be a metropolitan suburb, and, as such, has brought it into vogue. Until within a very few years, however, it was one of the quietest places in England, visited occasionally in the summer by a few people from town, who found that Hampstead had been already almost swallowed up in bricks and mortar, and who extended their outing to get a little fresher air, and to enjoy the lovely view from Hendon Church. But its inhabitants generally were nothing-doing people, bred and born in the parish, who preferred vegetating on an income which enabled them to keep a pony-chaise, and gave them perpetual leisure for pottering in their gardens, rather than adventuring their little capital in speculations which might be disastrous, and which undoubtedly would be questionable.

The house where Alice Claxton lived was on the right-hand side of the way as you turn from the little main street of the village towards the church. There is no use in looking for it now; it has been pulled down, and on its site have been erected two brand-new stucco villas, with plate-glass windows and brass door-knockers, high flights of door-steps with a stone pineapple on either side, and long strips of garden before and behind, which the land-

scape gardener's art has decorated with beds in the shape of pears, and hearts, and crosses, and various other elegant and appropriate designs. But in Alice's days it was a long, low-roofed, one-storied house, built of bricks of a comfortable warm ruddiness, without being glaringly red, and covered all over with a splendid Virginia creeper, which, at this autumnal time, was just assuming its loveliest hue. The rooms on the ground floor were large, with rather low ceilings, and opening with French windows on to a little paved terrace, verandah-covered. And it had been John Claxton's delight to suit the fittings and the furniture to the place for which they were destined. No modern stoves were to be found throughout it, but open fireplaces inlaid with tiles, and iron dogs; the high-backed chairs, the broad table, and the heavy sideboard of the dining-room, were all in antique black oak, but in the drawing-room he had endeavoured to consult what he considered to be his wife's fancy, and the Venetian mirrors on the walls reflected the sheen of green silk and gold, in which the low quaint chairs and sofa and ottoman were made, and produced endless repetitions of the numerous tasteful specimens of glass and china with which the various *étagères* and whatnots were liberally covered. Alice, who before her marriage had been governess to the children of a Quaker wine-merchant in York, whose drab furniture had done good service during three generations, at the first glimpse of her new home clapped her hands in childish delight, and immediately afterwards turning round, reproved her husband for his extravagance. But John Claxton, catching her in his arms, declared that it was only a little nest just fitted for his bright, shining, sweet little

bird, and he earnestly prayed that she might be happy in it.

And she was happy; so happy that she sometimes felt her happiness was too great to be lasting, and that some reverse of fortune must be in store for her. But these flights of depression only happened when John was away on his business tours, and then only during the first half of his absence, for during the second she was busy in contemplating his return, and in devising all kinds of little expedients to show how welcome he was. See her now on this bright October evening, so neatly and yet so becomingly dressed in her tightly-fitting mouse-coloured velvet gown, fastened round the waist by a narrow black leather belt and buckle, with a linen collar round her pretty throat, and linen cuffs showing off her small white hands. She had filled every available ornament with the remnants of the summer garden produce, the last of the monthly roses, and the scarlet geraniums and calceolarias, and the earliest of the autumnal crop of dahlias, china-asters, and chrysanthemums. The air was chill without, but within the light from the wood logs flickered brightly on the plate and glass set on the snowy tablecloth, in anticipation of dinner, and the very odour of the burning beech-wood was home-like and comforting. After giving a finishing touch to her flowers in the drawing-room, and again peeping into the dining-room to see that all was right and ready, Alice would open the glazed door and peer out into the darkness, would bend her head in eager listening for the sound of wheels entering the carriage-drive. After two or three experiments her patience was rewarded. First she heard the clanging of the closing gate, then the sound of the rapidly approaching carriage, and the next minute she was in her husband's arms.

"Now come in, John, at once, out of that bitter wind," she cried, as soon as she was released, which was not for a minute or two; "it is enough to cut you in two. It has been sighing and moaning round the house all day, and I am sure I was thankful that you were coming home and hadn't to go any sea voyages or other dreadful things."

"Thank you, my darling, I am all right, I shall do very well now," said John Claxton, in a chirping, cheery voice.

Why had Tom Durham called him old? There was a round bald place on the crown of his head to be sure, and such of his hair

as remained, and his whiskers, were streaked with grey. The lines round his eyes and mouth were somewhat deeply graven, and the brow was heavy and thoughtful, but his bright blue eyes were full of life and merriment, the tones of his voice were blithe and musical, his slight wiry figure, though a very little bowed and stooping, was as iron in its hardness, and when away from business he was as full of animal spirits and fun as any boy.

"I am all right, my darling," he repeated, as, after taking off his hat and coat, he went with her into the dining-room; "though I know it is by no means prudent to stand in draughts, especially for people of my age."

"Now, John," cried Alice, with up-lifted forefinger, "are you going to begin that nonsense directly you come into the house? You know how often I have told you that subject is tabooed, and yet you have scarcely opened your lips before you mention it."

"Well, my dear," said John Claxton, passing his arm round her and drawing her closely to him, "you know I have an age as well as other people, and a good deal more than a great many, I am sorry to say; talking of it won't make it any worse, you know, Alley, though you may argue that it won't make it any better."

"Silence!" she cried, stopping his speech by placing her hand upon his mouth. "I don't care whether it makes it better or worse, or whether it doesn't make it anything at all; I only know I won't have it mentioned here! Your age, indeed! What on earth should I do with you if you were a dandified petit maître in a short jacket, with a little cane, or a great hulking yaw-haw fellow in a tawny beard, such as one reads of in the novels."

"I have not the least idea, Alley, but I dare say you would manage to spare some of your sweet love and kindness for me, if I were either of the specimens you have mentioned. As I am neither, perhaps you will allow me to change my coat and wash my hands before dinner."

"That you shall do. You will find everything ready for you, and as you have had a long journey, and it is the first time of your return, I insist on your availing yourself of the privilege which I gave you on such occasions, and on your coming down in your shooting-coat and slippers, and making yourself comfortable, John, dear—and don't be long, for we have your favourite dinner."

When Mr. Claxton appeared in the

dining-room, having changed his coat for a velvet shooting-jacket, and his boots for a pair of embroidered slippers, his wife's handiwork, having washed his hands and brushed up his hair, and given himself quite a festive appearance, he found the soup already on the table.

"You are late, as usual, John," cried Alice, as he seated himself.

"I went to speak to Bell, dear," replied John Claxton; "but nurse motioned to me that she was asleep; so I crept up as lightly as I could to her little bedside, and bent down and kissed her cheek. She is quite well, I hope, dear, but her face looked a little flushed and feverish."

"There is nothing the matter with her, dear, beyond a little over-excitement and fatigue. She has been with me all day, in the greatest state of delight at the prospect of your return, helping me to cut and arrange the flowers, to get out the wine, and go through all the little household duties. I promised her she should sit up to see her papa, but little fairies of three or four years of age have not much stamina, and long before the time of your return she was dropping with sleep."

"Poor little pet! Sleep is more beneficial to her than the sight of me would have been, though I have not forgotten to bring the doll and the chocolate creams I promised her. However, the presentation of those will do well enough to-morrow."

The dinner was good, cosy, and delightful. They did not keep the servant in the room to wait upon them, but helped themselves and each other. When the cloth was removed, Alice drew her chair close to her husband, and according to regular practice poured out for him his first glass of wine.

"Your own particular Madeira, John," she said; "the wine that your old friend Mr. Calverley sent you when we were first married. By the way, John, I have often wanted to ask you what you drink at the hotels and the horrible places you go to when you are away—not Madeira, I am certain."

"No, dear, not Madeira," said John Claxton, fondly patting her cheek; "wine, beer, grog—different things at different times."

"Yes, but you never get anything so good as this, confess that?"

"Nothing that I enjoy so much, certainly; whether it is the wine, or the company in which the wine is drunk, I leave you to guess."

"Oh, it is the wine, I am sure! there is no such other wine in the world, unless Mr. Calverley has some himself. There now, talking of Mr. Calverley reminds me that you never have asked about Tom—about Tom, John—are you attending to what I say?"

"I beg your pardon, dear," said John Claxton, looking upward with rather a flushed face, and emptying his glass at a draught. "I confess my thoughts were wandering towards a little matter of business which had just flashed across me."

"You must put aside all business when you come here; that was a rule which I laid down at first, and I insist on its being adhered to. I was telling you about Tom, my brother, you know."

"Yes, dear, yes, I know—you went to Southampton to see him off."

"Yes, John; that is to say, I went to Southampton and I saw him there, but I did not actually see him off, that is see him sail, you know."

"Why, Alice, you went to Southampton for the express purpose!"

"Yes, John, I know; but you see the trains did not suit, and Tom thought I had better not wait, so I left him just an hour or two before the steamer started."

"I suppose he *did* go," said John Claxton, anxiously; "there is no doubt about that, I hope?"

"Not the least in the world, not the smallest doubt. To tell you the truth, John, I was rather anxious about it myself, knowing that Tom had the two thousand pounds which you sent him by me, you dear, kind, good fellow, and that he is—well, perhaps not quite so reliable as he might be—but I looked in the newspaper the next day, and saw his name as agent to Calverley and Company among the list of outgoing passengers."

"Did he seem tolerably contented, Alice?"

"Oh, yes, John; he went away in great spirits. I am in hopes that he will settle down now, and become a steady and respectable member of society. He has plenty of talent, I think, John, don't you?"

"Your brother has plenty of sharp, shrewd insight into character, and knowledge of the wickedness of the world, Alice," said Mr. Claxton somewhat bitterly; "these are not bad as stock-in-trade for a man of his nature, and I have no doubt they will serve his turn."

"Why, John," said Alice, with head upturned to look at him more closely, "how

cynically you are speaking. Are you not well, dear?"

"Quite well, Alice. Why do you ask?"

"Your face is rather flushed, dear, and there is a strange look in your eyes, such as I have never noticed before. Oh, John! I am certain you work too hard, and all this travelling is too much for you. When will you give it up?"

"When I see my way to settling down here in peace and comfort with you, my darling, and little Bell. Depend upon it when that opportunity comes I shall grasp it eagerly enough!"

"And when will it come, John?"

"That, my child, it is impossible to say; it may come sooner than we expect; I hope it will, I'm sure. It is the one thing now at the close of my life left me to look forward to."

"Don't talk about the close of your life in that wicked way, John. I am sure if you only take care of yourself when you are away on those journeys, and mind that your bed is always aired, and see that you have proper food, there is no question about the close of your life until you have seen little Bell grown up into a marriageable young woman."

"Poor little Bell," said John Claxton, with a grave smile; "dear little Bell. I don't think we did wrongly, Alice, in adopting this little fatherless, motherless waif?"

"Wrong, indeed! I should think not," said Alice, quickly. "Even from a selfish point of view it was one of the best things we ever did in our lives. See what a companion she is to me while you are away; see how the time which I have to spare after attending to the house, and my garden, and my reading, and my music, and all those things which you insist upon my doing, John, and which I really go through conscientiously every day; see how the spare time, which might be dull, is filled up in dressing her, and teaching her, and listening to her sweet little prattle. Do you think we shall ever find out whose child she was, John?"

"No dear, I should say not. You have the clothes which she had on, and the little gold cross that was found round the mother's neck after her death; it is as well to keep them in case any search should be made after the child, though the probability of that is very remote."

"We should not give Bell up, whatever search might be made, should we, John?" said Alice, quickly. "The poor mother is

dead, and the search could only originate with the father, and it is not likely that after leaving the mother of his child to die in a workhouse bed, he will have any long deferred stings of conscience to make him inquire as to what has become of her offspring. Oh, John, when I think of the wickedness that goes on in the world, through men, John, through men alone, for women are but what men choose to make them, I am so thankful that it was given to me to win the honest, noble love of an honourable man, and to be removed in good time from the temptations assailing a girl in the position which I occupied. Now, John, no more wine!"

"Yes," he cried, "give it to me quickly, full, full to the brim, Alice. There!" he said, as he drained it. "I am better now, I wanted some extra stimulant, to-night; I suppose I am knocked up by my journey."

"Your face was as pale then as it was flushed before, John. I shall take upon myself to nurse you, and you shall not leave home again until you are quite recovered, whatever Mr. Calverley may say! You should have him here some day, John, and let me talk to him. I warrant I would soon bring him round to my way of thinking."

"Your ways are sufficiently coaxing to do that with anybody, Alice," said John Claxton, with a faint smile; "but never mind Mr. Calverley just now; what were we saying before?"

"I was saying how pleased I was to be removed from the temptations to which a girl in the position which I held is always exposed."

"No," said Claxton, "I don't mean that—before."

"Yes, yes," said Alice, "I insist upon talking about these old times, John; you never will, and I have no one else who knows anything about them, or can discuss them with me. Now, do you recollect," she continued, nestling closer to him, "the first time you saw me?"

"Recollect it! As you were then, I can see you now."

"And so can I you, you are not altered an atom. You were standing at a book-stall in Low Onsegate, just beyond the bridge, looking into a book, and as I passed by with the two little Prestons you raised your eyes from the book and stared at me so hard, and yet so gravely, that I——"

"That you were quite delighted," said John Claxton, putting his arm round her; "you know that, so don't attempt a bash-

fulness which is foreign to your nature, but confess at once."

"I decline to confess any such thing," said Alice. "Of course, I was in the habit of being stared at by the officers and the young men of the town. Come now, there is the return blow for your impertinent hit just now; but one scarcely expects to create an impression on people whom one finds glozing over bookstalls."

"Elderly people, you should have said, Alice."

"Elderly people, I will say, John, if it pleases you. Much less does one expect to see them lay down the book, and come sailing up the street after one in direct pursuit."

"Oh! you saw that, did you, miss? You never told me that before!"

"Saw it, of course I saw it. What woman ever misses anything of that kind? At a distance you tracked me straight to Mr. Preston's door, saw me and my little charges safely inside, and then turned on your heel and walked away."

"While you went up to your room and sat down before your glass, admiring your own charms, and thinking of the dashing young cavalier whose attention you had just attracted. Was that it?" said John.

"Nothing of the sort, though I don't mind confessing that I did wonder whether I should ever see you again! And then, two days after, when Mrs. Preston told me to take the little girls into the drawing-room in the evening, and to be sure that they practised thoroughly some piece which they would be called upon to play, as there was a gentleman coming to dinner who doted on little children, how could I have the slightest idea that this benevolent Mr. Claxton was to be my friend of the Low Ousegate bookstall? And yet you scarcely spoke to me once during that evening, I remember!"

"That was my diplomacy, my child; but I paid great attention to Mrs. Preston, and was very favourably received by her."

"Yes, I heard Mr. Preston say to Mr. Arthur, as they stood behind the piano, 'He's of the house of Calverley and Company of Mincing-lane. Thee hast heard of it? Its transactions are enormous.'"

"And I won Mr. Preston's head by a good order for wine," said John Claxton; "and then I threw off all disguise, and I am afraid made it clear that I had only made his acquaintance for the sake of paying court to his governess."

"You need have very little delicacy in

that matter, John," said Alice; "neither Mr. nor Mrs. Preston had the slightest interest in me, and when I left they cared not what became of me. I suited them as a governess, and they were angry when I first told them I was going away; but when they saw that I had fully made up my mind, their sole thought was how best to supply my place. As to what became of me, that was no concern of theirs."

"No," said John Claxton, whose colour had returned, and who seemed to have regained his ordinary composure, "no concern, perhaps, of either Mr. or Mrs. Preston; but what about the young gentleman whom you mentioned just now, Alice, Mr. Preston's nephew, Mr. Arthur, as he was called? Your decision as to the future course of life you intended to adopt was not quite so immaterial to him, was it, child?"

"What do you mean, John?" said Alice, looking down, as the blood began to mount into her cheeks.

"You know well enough what I mean, child; exactly what I say. Mr. Arthur Preston took great interest in you—was in love with you, in point of fact—is not that so?"

"He said so, John; but his actions belied his words. No man who had any real, honest love—nay, more, I will go further, and say respect for a girl—could have spoken or acted towards me as he did."

"Why, Alice," said John Claxton, looking with surprise at her flushed cheeks, "you never told me anything of this before. Why have you kept it secret from me?"

"Because I know, John," said Alice, laying her hand upon his shoulder, "that however outwardly calm and quiet you may appear to be, however sensible and practical you are in most matters, you have a temper which, when anything touching my honour or my dignity is involved, is quite beyond your control. I have seen its effects before, John, and I dreaded any repetition of them."

"Then why do you tell me now?"

"Because we are far away from York, John, and from Arthur Preston and his friends, and there is no likelihood of our seeing any of them again, so that I know your temper can be trusted safely now, John; for however much it may desire to break out, it will find no object on which to vent itself."

"This conversation and conduct then of Mr. Arthur Preston were matters, I am to understand, in which your honour and dignity were involved, Alice?"

"To a certain extent, John, yes," faltered Alice.

"I should like to know what they were?" said John Claxton. "I put no compulsion on you to tell me. I have never asked you since our marriage to tell me anything of your previous life; but I confess I should like to know about this!"

"I will tell you, John," said Alice; "I always intended to do so; it is the only thing I have kept back from you, and often and often while you have been away have I thought, if anything happened to you or to me—if either of us were to die, I mean, John—how grieved I should be that I had not told you of this matter. Arthur Preston pretended he loved me, but he could not have done so really. No man who is wicked and base can know what real love is, John, and Arthur Preston was both. Some little time before I knew you he made love to me—fierce, violent love. I had not seen you then, John; I had scarcely seen any one. I was an unsophisticated country girl, and I judged of the reality of his love by the warmth of his professions, and told him I would marry him. I shall never forget that scene! It was one summer's evening, on the river-bank just abreast of Bishopthorpe. When I mentioned marriage he almost laughed, and then he told me in a cynical, sneering way, that he never intended to be married unless he could find some one with a large fortune, or with peculiar means of extending his uncle's business when he inherited it. But that, meanwhile, he would give me the prettiest house within twenty miles. I need not go on; he would not make me his wife, but he offered to make me his mistress. Was it not unmanly in him, John? Was it not base and cowardly?"

She stopped and looked at her husband. But John Claxton, whose face had become pale again, his chin resting on his hand, and his eyes glaring into the fire, made her no reply.

BRINGING HOME A BRIDE.

"At a time when"—as Mr. Barlow would have told Sandford and Merton*—the claims of the British labourer divide attention with the Alabama claims; when the ruin of the country is predicted for the hundredth time from a threatened rise in that bloated spendthrift's wages; when our concise and simple land-laws, our pa-

ternal game-laws, our equitable law of landlord and tenant, are all in danger; when, on the other hand, the urban public believe that a family quarrel on these topics is raging in many country parishes—it may be useful to describe a bright little scene enacted the other day by all these characters (except Barlow), for it affords some timely and pleasant considerations.

It was the home-coming of the squire of Platting-Hugh with his bride. The squire had intended, apparently, to get married "on the quiet," as they say in these parts. But he is the great man of the place, master of the H. B. fox-hounds, landlord of numerous farms, deputy-lieutenant, and all the rest of it; and his modest programme to get married at the country seat of the bishop of the diocese by special license, to be conveyed in a special train to a by-station, and to slip home unobserved, oozing out, the important population of Platting declared itself slighted, and rose as one man. It held public meetings, appointed a reception committee, and proclaimed a general holiday. Tenants on the estate, farmers all over the H. B. country, even the members of that distinguished hunt, declared that they would waylay the happy pair at their own park-gate, and greet them with a hearty welcome.

Upon these urgent representations the Chickabiddy station was abandoned, and the Platting station adopted. Being a stranger, I made for the wrong park-gate on the appointed day—having heard all the above gossip at the inn where my hunter stands—nor could I see a soul on my route to set me right. All the cottages on the Platting-Hugh estate which I passed—numerous and new-looking—were deserted. The one policeman at the Chickabiddy station who opened my way across the rails, knew nothing. Nobody could be observed in the home-farm yard; the lodge was shut up, the gate wide open; not a living creature to be seen, nor a sound to be heard in the park. Cantering over the turf between the trees, I felt like an explorer in some exquisitely planted backwoods. Was I too late? Had I been hoaxed? Had the marriage been put off; or, spiteful conjecture, had it gone off altogether?

The answer was startling. My horse shied: a burst of huzzas pierced by a tally-o or two which might have split, but were not muffled by the tent that covered them! Clear of my screen of trees, no pantomime ever displayed a quicker transfor-

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. i. p. 156.

mation scene. Suddenly presented to me were the decorated mansion in a dip of a grassy slope, triumphal arches, carriage-drives lined with Venetian masts and banners, the foreground crowned with an enormous marquee flaunting gaily with flags; crowds of riderless horses lazily led about by holiday labourers; lastly, their riders merrily emerging from the festive tent pulling on their gloves to mount. Previous solitude and silence were at once accounted for. Everybody belonging to the place was there, and nowhere else. Inside the tent everybody was listening to wedding-day oratory that commanded silence, until pent-up enthusiasm burst forth and banished every unhandsome doubt.

Showers of invitations to "just one glass of champagne to wish them joy, you know," dismounted and brought me inside the pavilion to behold an immense and sumptuous wedding-breakfast—Gunter fecit. But there was no time for feasting. An equestrian procession was being marshalled by a host of commanding officers amidst a medley of yeomanry and hunting shouts-of-command. Yet we managed to form fours behind a huge waggonette with magnificent post-boys containing the volunteer brass band, and promptly to obey a confusing order compounded of "Quick march!" and "Forra'd on!"

We presented a strong muster: four hundred horse at least. Our march through best part of a mile of gravelled drive did us real credit. We must have convinced the foreign invader (who, if present, naturally kept in the background) with what remarkable ease the English hunter can be trained into the formidable trooper. A few chargers, however, showed no taste for military music, especially a sturdy white cob, posted in the van, and therefore too near the waggonette. The brazen fanfare and the big drum drove him nearly mad. Yet, although he caused gaps in our ranks here and there, the way in which we halted at the gorgeous arch near to the gate of triumphal entry, deployed twos about, and formed up on the turf in a lane of single lines for the bridal procession to pass through, must have filled our innumerable commanders-in-chief with pride in themselves, admiration of us, and confidence in our horses; all which they showed by promulgating very complicated orders to be executed at the supreme moment. Also, for fear of mistakes, they put us through a distracting preliminary drill, which had the effect of thinning our ranks; large numbers of

scouts telling themselves off to distant coigns of vantage to give notice of the approach of the carriage and (happy) pair.

A high embankment outside the park-gate conducts the railway into Platting. Upon this all eyes were fixed. Something like a shrill view-hallo in remote perspective is discerned. Was it the special whistle? Attention! Another sibilation, more distinct, followed very soon by the special itself. It passes at "slowed" pace. Four hundred of the soundest lungs in two counties discharge a volley of cheers which, drowning the noise of the engine, must have startled the two distinguished passengers who had so recently been made one.

"Surely we shall not have to wait much longer now," I remarked to my left-hand file.

"Ah!" he replied, "you don't know the Platting folks. When once they get hold of 'em" ('em I took to mean the squire and his bride) "they won't part with 'em in a hurry."

This gentleman's further information may be summed up thus. Platting shops shut, streets lined with streamers and people. Band of Royal Horse Guards from London. Procession formed of freeholders, flagholders, and lodge Number Fifteen Hundred and One of the Odd Fellows. School children to sing, in the red-carpeted station, a hymn composed expressly for the occasion by the Platting poet.

Meanwhile, more loud music: white cob next to unmanageable, obliging its accomplished rider

To witch the world with noble horsemanship

more frantically than ever. Gradual reaction into subdued expectation; the merest motion at the gate causing a universal flutter. The first views of a much admired viscountess driving her grand roan, of a one-horse waggonette freighted with back views all chignon and white muslin, of three policemen in three single detachments—each separately greeted with a half spoken "Here they are!"

But see! The only scout in sight on the margin of the lake capers uneasily. He canters towards the arch. Here comes another, galloping; a third; a dozen; twenty; half a hundred; squadrons of outposts galloping like mad. No mistake now. A faint cheer in the Platting road. Yet no wedding carriage. Delay accounted for by a halted scout breathless and deliquescent. Young ladies at the gate, he

gasps, are showering bouquets on the bride, and more school children are singing more hymns, composed expressly for the occasion by the Platting poet. A sweet musical little cheer is wafted to us—end of hymn, perhaps. Four yeomanry cavalry in full uniform prance into view through the gate. Then (tremendous excitement), seated in an open calèche,

THE BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

The blare of music, even the park artillery is drowned by every form of cheering known to excited mankind. Total military disorganisation and grand concentric charge, until every horse is wedged in tight round the carriage. Dead stoppage. Bride and bridegroom bowing and smiling at large; carriage gradually disentangled, and the mass moves on pell-mell. A shriek! Alarming halt. The white cob has disposed of his rider close under the hoofs of the bridal horses. Shock recovered (nobody hurt), a mobbed and tangled race commences for the near side of the calèche and a sight of the bride. I win. One glance confirms the county verdict to the full. If I said more, superlatives (however truthful) might spur me over the fences of propriety. For this there would be no excuse after the remarkable instance of good taste then displayed. A great open semicircle of turf stretches out in front of the mansion. Here, by a spontaneous instinct, the whole festive army halted, that the squire might alight with his bride at his own door alone. An enormous half-moon of by no means irregular horse was, consequently, drawn up on the outer edge of this huge lawn. But, when the calèche moved empty away from under the portico leaving the handsome spouses standing hand-in-hand on the steps bowing their thanks, an inspired trumpeter sounded the charge, and the dense circle made a fearful rush up to the very pillars of the portico. The bridegroom favoured us with a pleasant thanksgiving speech, the lady took an emotional leave in dumb-show amidst final volleys of ringing acclamation, and, led into the house by her husband, the ceremony of Bringing Home the Bride was completed.

During my return—especially on the crown of the hill outside the park overlooking a broad extent of excellent farming—the spirit of Barlow was drearily supplanted in my soul by the shade of Pinnock. In the vein of that immortal catechist I asked myself a whole sixpenny-

book full of questions. What did this merry, warm-hearted welcome indicate? Was it purse-worship of a millionaire: kow-tow to a golden idol? Was it family worship offered up to the heir of a long line of ancestry? Did it, on the contrary, testify to the results of clean and careful tillage observable as far as the eye could reach, to the well-built home-steading, to the clusters of comfortable labourers' cottages, and to the fact that where the land is well cared for, human beings are well-cared for also? Would there be starvation, and dissension, and strikes anywhere, if other estates were as well administered as, to the stranger's eye, this Platting-Hugh property appears to be? Would not a great many noble lords and right honourable and honourable gentlemen who sit in parliament under the pretence of managing the affairs of the nation, render the nation more happy, glorious, and (best of all) contented, if they would condescend to give more time and closer attention to their own affairs; or, if they would select land-stewards with higher objects than screwing down wages, screwing up rents, taking everything that can be got off the land, and putting nothing into it or upon it except game?

And so—leaving the answers to wiser heads than mine—ends my catechism.

GENERAL TACON'S JUDGMENT.

SINCE the Pearl of the Antilles has adorned the Spanish crown, the island of Cuba has always been governed by a captain-general, a mighty personage, invested with much the same power of authority as that of a monarch in some countries, and like a king could not possibly do anything that was wrong. The Cubans have seldom had reason to be grateful to Spain for the rulers she has appointed over them, because these have been usually selected rather on the score of influence than capacity or merit. There is, however, on record at least one captain-general whose name is held in esteem by the Cuban people, on account of the good he effected during his short reign in Havannah. Captain-General Tacon established some degree of safety for the inhabitants by introducing new laws, and by severely punishing certain social offences which his predecessors had rather overlooked, if they did not themselves set the example. It is said of Tacon that, like Alfred the Great, he promised

the Cubans that they should be able to cast their purses upon the public pavement, and yet find them there again after many days. Stories are current in Cuba of the general's singular mode of administering justice, which in many cases partook of an originality somewhat whimsical of its kind. The most popular story of this sort is that of the Cigar Girl of Havannah, told to the traveller by those who were living in Cuba during General Tacon's administration.

The writer of this paper has gathered the facts of this very romantic tale, which he now offers to the reader, in the following form :

Miralda Estalez was remarkable alike for the beauty of her person and the excellence of her tobacco. She kept a cigar-shop in Havannah, in the Calle del Comercio; a narrow street, with a footpath scarcely wider than an ordinary kerbstone. It was the veriest section of a shop, without a front of any kind; presenting, from the street side, much the same appearance as a burnt-out dwelling would exhibit, or a theatrical scene viewed by an audience. During the hot hours of the day a curtain was suspended before the shop to ward off the powerful rays of the sun, under whose influence the delicate goods within might otherwise be prematurely dried, while the effect would be equally detrimental to their fair vender. The easy mode of egress, assisted by the narrow kerbstone, together with many attractions within the shop, tempted many passers to drop in for a chat and a cigar. There was a little counter, with little pyramidal heaps of cigarette packets and cigars, of the genuine Havannah brand, distributed upon it. Affixed to a wall at the back was a glass showcase, fitted with shelves like a bookcase, and laden with bundles of the precious leaves, placed like volumes side by side, and bound in bright yellow ribbon. Although Miralda was visited from morning till night by every kind of male, black and brown, as well as white, nothing was ever said against the virtue of the young tobacco-nist.

Like the cigars she sold, Miralda was of "Calidad superior;" and, in the same manner, age had rather improved her quality than otherwise, for it had ripened her into a charming full-grown woman of sixteen tropical summers. Some merit was due to Miralda for the virtuous life she led; for, besides the temptations to which she was daily and hourly subjected, she was

quite alone in the world, her parents, brothers, and sisters being dead. Miralda naturally found many admirers among her numerous customers; she, however, made no distinction with them, but had a bright smile and a kind word for all who favoured her with their praises and their patronage. One alone, perhaps, held a place nearer her heart than all others. This was Don Pedro Mantanez, a young boatman employed in the harbour near the Morro Castle. Pedro was of good white parentage, though one would not have judged so from the colour of his skin, which, from long exposure to the sun and the weather, had turned a pale coffee colour. Pedro loved Miralda fondly, and she was by no means averse to the handsome creole. But the pretty tobacco-nist was in no hurry to wear the matrimonial chains. The business, like herself, was far from old-established, and she thought in her capacity of a married woman the attractions of her shop would diminish by at least one-half, while her patrons would disappear in the same ratio. Miralda once made her lover a promise that she would marry him as soon as he should have won a prize in the lottery; for, with his savings, this would enable Pedro to have a share in her business as well as in her happiness. So, once a month Pedro invested a doubloon in lottery-tickets; but, as he never succeeded in winning a prize, he failed to wed the pretty tobacco-nist. Still, the young boatman continued to drop anchor at the cigar-shop as often as his spare time would allow; and as the fond couple always conducted themselves with the strictest propriety, their engagement remained a secret.

Now Pedro Mantanez had a rival, and, to a certain extent, a formidable one. The Count Almante was a noble of Spanish birth, and an officer by profession. He was one of those fortunate gentlemen who, from no inherent talent or acquired ability, had been sent from the mother-country to enrich himself in her prosperous colony. Besides his wealth, which report described as ill-gotten, he gloried in the reputation of being a gay cavalier in Havannah, and a great favourite with the creole ladies. It was his boast that no girl beneath him in station had been yet known to reject any offer he might propose; and he would sometimes lay wagers with his associates that the lady whom he had newly honoured with his admiration would, at a given time, stand entered in his book of amours as a fresh conquest. To achieve any particular ob-

ject the count would never allow anything, human or otherwise, to stand in his path; and by reason of his wealth, his nobility, and his influence with the authorities, his crimes were numerous and his punishments few, if any.

It happened that the last señorita who had taken Count Almante's fancy was Miralda Estalez. The count spent many hours and many pesetas at the pretty tobacco-shop's counter, where, we may be sure, he used his most persuasive language to attain his very improper purpose. Accustomed to have pretty things poured into her ears by a variety of admirers, Miralda regarded the count's addresses with indifference; and, while behaving with her wonted amiability of manner, gave him neither encouragement nor motive for pressing his suit. One evening the count lingered at the cigar-shop longer than custom allows, and, under the pretence of purchasing and smoking more cigars, remained until the neighbouring shops were closed and the streets were deserted. Alone with the girl, and insured against intruders, Count Almante ventured to disclose his unworthy passion. Amongst other things, he said:

"If you will love me and live with me I will give you as many golden onzas as you require, and I will place at your disposal another and a better shop in the suburbs of the Cerro, where you can carry on your business as before."

The Cerro was situated near the count's palace. Miralda said nothing in reply; but, looking the count steadily in the face, gave him the name of another shop where, she informed him, he would obtain better cigars than those she sold.

Heedless of the significance of her remark, which he attributed to shyness, Almante rose from where he had been seated, and, approaching the girl, endeavoured to place his arm round her waist. Ever guarded against the casualties of insult, Miralda retreated a step, and at the same moment drawing a small dagger from the folds of her dress, warned the count not to touch her. Baulked in his design, Almante withdrew, assuring the girl with a smile that he did but jest; but as he left the shop he bit his lip and clenched his fist with evident disappointment.

When Pedro heard of what had happened, his indignation was great, and he resolved to take summary vengeance; but Miralda begged him not to be precipitate, as she had now no fear of further molesta-

tion from the count; and as days elapsed, and Almante had not resumed his visits, it seemed apparent that he had taken Miralda's advice, and transferred his custom elsewhere.

One evening, as Miralda was about closing her shop for the night, a party of soldiers halted before her door. The commanding officer entered, and, without a word, presented to the astonished tobacco-shop's counter a warrant for her arrest. Knowing that it was useless to disobey any officer in the employ of the captain-general, Miralda signified her readiness to accompany the military escort, who, accordingly, placed her in their midst, and conducted her through the streets in the direction of the prison. But instead of halting here, the party continued their march until they had reached the confines of the city. Miralda's courage now deserted her, and, with tears in her eyes, she appealed to the officer in command.

"Por la Virgen Santísima!" she exclaimed, "let me know where I am being taken to."

"You will learn when you get there. Our orders strictly forbid us to make any explanation," was the only reply she obtained.

Miralda was not long in learning the worst. Very shortly her escort halted before Count Almante's castle, in the neighbourhood of the Cerro, and, having entered the court-yard of that building, the fair captive was conducted tremblingly into a chamber elegantly fitted up for her reception. After waiting here a few minutes in painful suspense, an inner door was thrown open, and Count Almante stood before her. The scene which then followed may be better imagined than described. We may be sure that the count used every effort in order to prevail upon his prisoner, but without success. Miralda's invariable response was a gleam of her dagger, which never left her hand from the first moment of entering the odious building. Finding that mild measures would not win the pretty tobacco-shop's counter, the count, as is usual under such circumstances with persons of his nature, threatened her with violence; and he would, doubtless, have carried out his threat if Miralda had not anticipated him by promising to relent and to become his if her persecutor would allow her one short week to reconsider her determination. Deceived by the girl's assumed manner, Almante acceded to her desire, and agreed to wait

the prescribed days. Miralda, however, felt assured that before their expiration her lover would discover her whereabouts, and by some means effect her release. She was not disappointed. Miralda's sudden disappearance was soon made known to Pedro Mantanez, who, confident that his beloved had fallen into the count's clutches, determined to obtain access to Almante's palace. For this purpose he assumed the dress of a monk; and his face being unknown at the castle, he easily obtained an entry, and afterwards an interview with Miralda herself. The girl's surprise and joy at beholding her lover was unbounded. In his strong embrace she became oblivious of her sorrows, confident that the young boatman would now conduct her speedily into a harbour of refuge. She was not mistaken. Pedro sought and obtained an audience with General Tacon. The general was, as usual, immersed in public affairs; but, being gifted with the enviable faculties of hearing, talking, and writing at the same moment, merely glanced at his applicant, and desired him to tell his story. Pedro did as he was desired, and when he had concluded, Tacon, without raising his eyes from the papers over which he appeared intently engaged, made the following inquiry:

"Is Miralda Estalez your sister?"

"No, su excelencia, she is not," replied Pedro.

"Your wife, perhaps?" suggested the general.

"She is my betrothed!"

General Tacon motioned the young man to approach, and then directing a look to him which seemed to read him through, held up a crucifix, and bade him swear to the truth of all that he had stated. Pedro knelt, and taking the cross in both hands, kissed it, and made the oath required of him. Having done so, the general pointed to an apartment, where he desired Pedro to wait until he was summoned. Aware of the brief and severe manner in which General Tacon dealt with all social questions, Pedro Mantanez left the august presence in doubt whether his judge would decide for or against his case. His suspense was not of long duration. In an hour or so one of the governor's guards entered, ushering in Count Almante and his captive lady. The general received the new-comers in the same manner as he had received the young boatman. In a tone of apparent indifference, he addressed the count as follows:

"If I am not mistaken, you have abused your authority by effecting the abduction of this girl?"

"I confess I have done so," replied the count, in a tone intended to assimilate that of his superior; "but," he continued, with a conciliatory smile, "I think that the affair is of such a nature that it need not occupy the attention of your excellency."

"Well, perhaps not," said his judge, still busy over the documents before him. "I simply wish to learn from you, upon your word of honour, whether any violence has been used towards the girl."

"None whatever, upon my honour," replied Almante, "and I am happy in believing that none will be required!"

"Is the girl already yours, then?"

"Not at present," said the count, with a supercilious smirk, "but she has promised to become mine very shortly."

"Is this true?" inquired the captain-general, for the first time raising his eyes, and turning to Miralda, who replied:

"My promise was made only with a view to save myself from threatened violence."

"Do you say this upon your oath?"

"Upon my oath I do!"

The general now ordered Pedro Mantanez to appear, and then carefully interrogated the lovers upon their engagement. Whilst doing so, he wrote a despatch, and handed it to one of his guards. When the latter had departed, Tacon despatched a messenger in quest of a priest and a lawyer. When these arrived, the general commanded the priest to perform the ceremony of marriage between Miralda Estalez and Count Almante, and bid the lawyer prepare the necessary documents for the same purpose.

The count, who had already expressed his vexation at what promised to be an attempt to deprive him of his new favourite by allying her with the boatman, was horrified when he heard what the governor's mandate really was. His indignation was extreme, and he endeavoured to show how preposterous such an alliance would be by reminding the general of his noble birth and honourable calling. Pedro was equally disappointed at being thus dispossessed of his betrothed, and appealed to Tacon's generosity and sense of right. Miralda remained speechless with astonishment, but with the most perfect reliance in the wisdom of her judge. Meanwhile, in spite of all remonstrances, the marriage was formally consummated, and Miralda Estalez

and Count Almante were man and wife. The unhappy bridegroom was then requested to return to his palace in the Cerro, while his bride and her late lover were desired to remain.

Upwards of an hour had passed since the count's departure, and nothing further transpired. The governor had resumed his business affairs, and appeared, as before, utterly unconscious of all present. He was however shortly interrupted by the appearance of the guard whom he had despatched with his missive.

"Is my order executed?" inquired the general, looking up for a moment only.

"Si, mi general, it is," replied the guard. "Nine bullets were fired at the count as he rode round the corner of the street mentioned in your despatch."

Tacon then ordered that the marriage and death of Count Almante should be given every publicity, and that legal steps should be taken for the purpose of showing that the property and name of the defunct was inherited by his disconsolate widow. When the general's commands had been fulfilled, and a decent period after the count's demise had transpired, it need scarcely be added that Pedro Mantanez married the countess, with whom he lived happily ever after.

FOOTSTEPS.

*In the quiet hour of gloaming,
When the hush is upon the earth,
When the stars gleam out and the low winds moan,
I sit and listen—listen alone,
By the side of the desolate hearth.*

*I listen, but not to the homeless leaves,
As they drift 'gainst the window pane;
Nor the sighing wind from the fir-crowned hill,
Nor the sigh and sob of the swollen rill,
Nor the whisper of careless rain.*

*I listen, I listen, and but to hear
The footsteps that fall around;
The footsteps that gladdened my life of yore,
The footsteps that seek my side no more,
That fall on no earthly ground.*

*The tiny steps of my first-born
Come pattering quick and soft;
He had trod like a man, had he stayed, by this,
Yet oh I yearn for the baby kiss,
He tottered to give so oft.*

*His firm tread rings out gallantly,
Just as it wont to do,
When I used to spring from this same low seat,
The comer I loved the best to greet,
As he strode through the evening dew.*

*Slow and heavy, and quick and light
The echoes around me come.
The steps that through youth's gay footpaths ranged,
Of friends forgotten, of friends estranged,
Who once made life and home.*

*Ah well, poor salvage from the wreck
All memory saves and stores,
Yet the sounds that people the sweet Past's dreams
Are dearer to me than the light that gleams
On the lonely Present's shores.*

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

DRIVEN TO CANNIBALISM.

I ONCE travelled for seventeen days with a cannibal and found him excellent "company." Why does your hair stand so suddenly on end, my worthy reader? My cannibal was no wild South Sea Islander, with face painted vermilion, a brass ring through his hideous nose, and the thigh-bone of a man stuck horizontally through his matted hair. He was simply a young English sailor, taciturn and somewhat graver than became his years. He spliced the rigging, skipped up the ratlines, and hung on to the great rolls of half-reefed sails, just like his blither companions, and snapped his biscuit, bolted his junk, and tossed off his rum in the ordinary nautical manner, with evidently no more sense of being a Pariah, or an exceptional person in any way, than I, the cabin-passenger in the Levant schooner *Argyroupolos*, experienced.

The man's story was very simple. The trading vessel in which he was five years before I met him, had been wrecked on the shore of New Holland. The captain, a black cook, and three sailors, escaped in a boat with no food but a bag of biscuits, a lump of pork, and a breaker (or small keg) of fresh water; but this last treasure was stove in on landing. The next day, their food all but gone, and no wild animal being visible, the six shipwrecked men began their painful journey through the bush in search of some human habitation. The second day the captain sank from fatigue, and soon after died. The third day one of the men had to be left behind. The fourth day the black cook fell ill, and could go no further. That night the first horrible thought of cannibalism came upon my informant. He described to me with simple pathos his horror at finding the black man dead in the night, his still greater horror, when he stole towards the body at daybreak to cut off a limb, to see his only companion creeping also towards it. Of that unhallowed meal both the starving men ate that day, haunted by a terrible sense of doing an unhallowed thing to which death was almost preferable. It is no fitting place here to describe how each day this horror grew less, or how at

last, at the very time that another victim seemed inevitable, two or three natives appeared, and procured them a meal by collecting a peculiar sort of huge fat grub from hollows in the fallen gum-trees. A day or two after this my informant's friend died of eating some poisonous sort of fish he had caught and cooked against the advice of the natives, and gaunt and worn, the sole survivor, my cannibal companion reached at last, after many sufferings and dangers, a native settlement, and was saved.

It needs little to prove our argument that debased animal natures, unaccustomed, and, after a time, unable to restrain any animal cravings under severe privations, soon sink into cannibalism. An example. The colony of Hobart Town was established in 1803. In 1814, gangs of bush-rangers began to appear. In five years 1822-7, more than one hundred and twenty prisoners escaped from the chain-gangs at Port Macquarie and turned bush-rangers. With few exceptions, the whole of these were either hung, shot by soldiers, starved to death, or were killed and eaten by their comrades. In the year 1822, six convicts escaped from Macquarie; after ten days' hunger two of the men, named Pierce and Greenhill, agreed to kill a third, named Dalton, and eat him, which was done. A few days after, Greenhill butchered another man named Bodenham, and he too was eaten. The next sufferer, John Mather, was allowed half an hour to pray, and then underwent the same terrible fate. After this two men returned to Port Macquarie, surrendered themselves, and in a few days died of exhaustion. Three only were left in the bush; Travers, the weakest, was soon killed, and the survivors dried part of the flesh and took it with them. They had now reached a beautiful country, abounding with kangaroo and emu, but they had no strength to catch them. The two cannibals dragged on glaring at each other, waiting for an opportunity to strike. Pierce, remembering that a dead comrade had said of the monster Greenhill, "that he would kill his own father rather than fast a day," was afraid to sleep or even take a step in advance of him. He kept the solitary axe under his head at night and on his shoulder all day. At last Greenhill fell, either by accident or fatigue, and Pierce, instantly springing on him, struck him dead, and after making a meal travelled on, carrying with him the thigh and arm of his late associate for future use. Pierce afterwards

committed other robberies and murders, but was ultimately captured and hung.

There is no question that at a certain point of starvation there arises the horrible craving for cannibalism. Some brave and staunch men resist the dreadful temptation and die (by preference) voluntarily of hunger. The majority, the weaker natures, succumb. This contrast is strikingly shown in the story of the wreck of the *Medusa*, when, it will be remembered, that the officers were the slowest to yield to cannibalism, and the first to relinquish it. As anger boils over into murder, as avarice often corrupts into theft, so starvation among healthy and vigorous men has a tendency to resort to cannibalism. In New Zealand the detestable practice seems to have originated in a revengeful gratification of a conqueror's hatred, but still more in the utter want of flesh food and the absence of all living animals, till the English brought that savoury food, the pig.

The steps by which men, in the impiety of their despair, driven half mad by starvation, sink into this last resource of suffering humanity, are depicted with astonishing simple force and naive exactitude in the following narrative of the miraculous deliverance of Captain David Harrison, of the sloop *Peggy*. This unfortunate vessel—a poor rickety, single-decked craft—sailed from New York on the 28th of August, 1765, with a cargo of lumber, staves, beeswax, fish, &c., for the Azores, and arrived safe at Fayal on the 5th of the following October. At Fayal, Captain Harrison, an energetic God fearing man, received on board a cargo of twenty pipes of brandy, seventy-three pipes of wine, and one negro slave, named Wiltshire, who was sent out from New York as an article of merchandise, had failed to find a purchaser, and was now quietly reshipped for America. On the 22nd of October, Harrison, having got his cargo snugly stowed away, eager to start, went ashore for his letters and despatches, being apprehensive, in so small a vessel, of the dangerous Atlantic seas that rage in winter round the coast of America.

It was more haste worse speed with a vengeance in poor Captain Harrison's case. For days after leaving Fayal the wind began to rise, and rip went the only standing jib on board. Still blowing hard, a few days after, away went two parts of the foremast main shrouds, and the next day the continued nor'-wester carried away two fore main shrouds on the starboard side,

and so the good ship the Peggy was plucked feather by feather. Till the 12th of November the weather was raging bad, the seas excessively heavy, and the peals of thunder almost ceaseless. A lull of one day followed, and then it began to blow "black December," and harder than ever; the sea growing mountains high. Straining very hard, but still scudding away, the poor Peggy, on the 17th, lost her last spare sail, and while lying-to, in the same terrible gale, the flying-jib blew away. She still, however, made some little struggling way under easy sail till the 1st of December, when another furious gale attacked her, and a dreadful sea broke two of the main chain-plates, and shattered and rendered useless the foresail. The Peggy was now, indeed, in evil case; she had only one bit of canvas left; she leaked excessively, and Captain Harrison, finding provisions running short, had to limit the crew to two pounds of bread a week each, and a quart of water and a pint of wine a day. The alternative was terrible; if the vessel was saved the food would soon be all gone; while even if the food lasted the vessel would most probably soon sink. To add to the misery and despair of the crew of the Peggy, she sighted two vessels during this storm, one from Jamaica, bound for London, the other from Dublin to New York, but they could only speak and pass on.

With no hope of escape, the worthy captain had long since had to twist the screw closer. The daily allowance of provisions had been lessened, till every crumb and shred were exhausted, and there remained only about two gallons of dirty water at the bottom of one cask. The men, faint with hunger, and worn out with the ceaseless toil at the pumps, became at last mutinous, and told the captain boldly that as nothing else was left, he must not be surprised if they began to broach the wine and brandy. They soon, unfortunately, plunged into excess, cursed and swore all day, and grew deaf to all sense of honour or duty. The honest captain, however, supported by higher feeling, lived "as much as possible" on the dregs of the water-cask, and to that self-denial he owed the fact of surviving the ghastly complication of calamities that followed.

After long hopeless days of tossing at the mercy of winds and waves, the crew of the Peggy, to their extravagant joy, on the morning of the 25th of December, saw a sail to leeward. They all crowded upon deck, and instantly hung out a proper signal

of distress, and about eleven A.M. got near enough to speak and to inform the vessel of their plight, and to obtain a welcome assurance of relief. Their petition was a very humble one, only a little bread—all indeed, as the stranger captain assured them, he could spare them, as his own stock was running very low. They must wait, however, he added, till twelve, when he had to make an observation. Relieved by this momentary gleam of hope, Captain Harrison, not only emaciated with fatigue and fasting, but labouring under three painful diseases, a severe flux, impaired sight, and acute rheumatism in the right knee, went down to his cabin for half an hour's restorative sleep. He had not been many minutes there, however, before the sailors came running down in unutterable despair, informing him in scarcely intelligible words that the vessel was making from them as fast as she could, and that they were now left to inevitable destruction. When Harrison crawled upon deck, he found, to his inexpressible grief, that their statement was only too true. The selfish captain had taken the reef out of his topsails and mainsail, and in less than five hours, with a free breeze in his favour, was entirely out sight. As long as the cruel vessel remained even as large as a fly against the horizon, the Peggy's crew hung about the shrouds, or ran in a perfect frenzy from one part of the ship to the other to collect signals of distress. They pierced the air with their cries, which increased as the ship grew smaller and smaller, and strained their very eyeballs to keep her in sight, in a despairing hope that some sudden impulse of pity might yet induce the captain to turn and stretch out a blessed hand of relief. What renders this man's conduct more detestable was the fact that Captain Harrison had promised if he would take his crew from the doomed vessel not to accept a single morsel of his provisions.

"My people," says Captain Harrison, "being thus unhappily cut off from all assistance, where they were so fully persuaded of meeting with an instant relief, became now as much dejected with their disappointment as they grew formerly transported with their joy. A desperate kind of gloom sat upon every face, which seemed regardless of the horror that was continually expected to burst upon our heads, at the same time that it indicated a determination to put off the fatal moment to the utmost verge of possibility. Actuated, therefore, by a resolution of holding out as

long as we were able, we turned our thoughts upon a pair of pigeons and a cat, which we had not yet destroyed, and which were the only living animals on board besides ourselves. The pigeons we killed for our Christmas dinner, and the day following made away with our cat, casting lots for the several parts of the poor creature, as there were no less than nine of us to partake of the repast. The head fell to my share, and in all my days I never feasted on anything which appeared so delicious to my appetite—the piercing sharpness of necessity had entirely conquered my aversion to such food, and the rage of an incredible hunger rendered that an exquisite regale which, on any other occasion, I must have loathed with the most insuperable disgust. After the cat was entirely consumed, my people began to scrape the barnacles from the ship's bottom; but the relief afforded from this expedient was extremely trivial, as the waves had beaten off the greatest number that were above water, and the men were infinitely too weak to hang over the ship's side to gather them; their continued intoxication seemed, however, in some measure to keep up their spirits, though it hastened the destruction of their health, and every dawn of reflection was carried off in a storm of blasphemy and execration."

Luckily for the brave captain, he had taken such an utter aversion to wine from the constant steam of the liquors the sailors were all day heating in the steerage, that he subsisted entirely on the refuse water in the dirty casks, drinking half a pint of it, with a few drops of Turlington's balsam in it for a flavour, every four-and-twenty hours. In this miserable situation he would have patiently waited for the wave that was to sweep him into eternity, had it not been for the sustaining thought of his wife and young children, who were, perhaps, at that very moment praying for his return.

Matters just then, indeed, appeared hopeless even to the youngest, healthiest, and most sanguine. Harrison was powerless with sickness, the men were either too exhausted or too drunk to keep steady at the pumps, it blew harder than ever, and the last sail had just been torn away by a fresh nor-wester. The vessel was now a mere unguidable wreck, and, worst of all, there was not a single inch of candle left to cheer the long dark winter nights. It seemed impossible that any new misfortune could render their condition more deplorable, and

even Captain Harrison now abandoned all hope. Unable to hold a pen, he from henceforth ceased to even attempt to keep log or journal, but from time to time made some brief memoranda with chalk on the cabin panels. The climax of these horrors was fast approaching. Their last morsel of meat had been the cat of the 26th of December.

"On the 13th of January following," says the captain, "being still tossed about at the discretion of the sea and wind, my mate came to me in the cabin, half drunk, indeed, but with looks so full of horror as partly indicated the nature of their dreadful purpose, and informed me 'that they could hold out no longer, that their tobacco was entirely exhausted, that they had eaten up all the leather belonging to the pumps, and even the buttons off their jackets, that now they had no chance in nature but to cast lots, and to sacrifice one of themselves for the preservation of the rest.' They therefore expected my concurrence in the measure, and desired me to favour them with an immediate determination. Perceiving them in liquor, I endeavoured to soothe them from their purpose as well as I could, begged that they would retire to rest, and that in case Providence did not interpose in their favour by the next morning, we would consult further on the subject. Instead of regarding my request, however, they swore, with a determined burst of execration, that what was to be done must be done immediately, and that it was indifferent to them whether I acquiesced or not, for, although they had been so kind as to acquaint me with their resolution, they would oblige me to take my chance as well as another man, since the general misfortune had levelled all distinction of persons."

Captain Harrison, who had long expected some act of violence, had daily kept his pistols loaded by him for fear of surprise; but too weak to resist by force, and finding the sailors deaf to all remonstrances, he merely told them that he would on no account either sanction the death of any one of them, nor partake of the horrible repast. They replied roughly that they did not want his consent, and as to eating or not eating he could just do as he liked. They returned to the steerage to cast lots, and in a few minutes returned to say that they had each taken a chance for their lives, but that the lot had fallen on the negro. The short time that they were absent, and the privacy of the lottery, infused

strong suspicions into the captain's mind that the poor black had not had fair play, but on further reflection he only wondered that they had even given him the appearance of a chance.

"The miserable black," says Captain Harrison, "well knowing his fate was at hand, and seeing one of the fellows loading a pistol to despatch him, ran to me, begging I would endeavour to save his life. Unfortunately for him I was totally without power. They therefore dragged him into the steerage, where in less than two minutes they shot him through the head. They suffered him to lie but a very little time before they ripped him open, intending to fry part of him for supper, there being a large fire made ready for the purpose. But one of the foremast-men, whose name was John Campbell, being ravenously impatient for food, tore the flesh, and devoured it raw as it was, notwithstanding the fire at his hand, where it could be immediately dressed. The unhappy man paid dear for such an extravagant impatience, for in three days after he died raving mad, and was, the morning of his death, thrown overboard, the survivors, greatly as they wished to preserve his body, being fearful of sharing his fate, if they ventured to make as free with him as with the unfortunate negro. But to return. The black affording my people a luxurious banquet, they were busy the principal part of the night in feasting on him, and did not retire to rest till two in the morning. About eight o'clock the next day, the mate came to ask my orders, relative to pickling the body, an instance of brutality which shocked me so much, that I grasped a pistol, and mustering all the strength I was master of, I swore, unless he instantly quitted the cabin, I would send him after the negro. Seeing me determined, he withdrew, but muttered, as he went out, that the provision should be taken care of without my advice, and that he was sorry he had applied to me, since I was no longer considered as master of the ship. Accordingly he called a council, where it was unanimously agreed to cut the body into small pieces, and to pickle it, after chopping off the head and fingers, which they threw overboard by common consent.

"Three or four days after, as they were stewing and frying some steaks, as they called the slices which they cut from the poor negro (for they stewed these slices first in wine and afterwards either fried or broiled them) I could hear them say, 'Damn

him, though he would not consent to our having any meat, let us give him some,' and immediately one of them came into the cabin, and offered me a steak. I refused the tender with indignation, and desired the person who brought it, at his peril to make the offer a second time. In fact, the constant expectation of death, joined to the miserable state to which I was reduced, through sickness and fatigue, to say nothing of my horror at the food with which I was presented, entirely took away my desire of eating. Add also to this, that the stench of their stewing and frying threw me into an absolute fever, and that this fever was aggravated by a strong scurvy and a violent swelling in my legs. Sinking under such an accumulated load of afflictions, and being, moreover, fearful, if I closed my eyes, that they would surprise and murder me for their next supply, it is no wonder that I lost all relish for sustenance."

Notwithstanding the drunkenness of the men, they husbanded the negro's carcass with the greatest economy, setting themselves on the strictest allowance. But when it was nearly expended, Harrison could constantly hear the sailors talking among themselves about the necessity of killing him next rather than cast lots among themselves. The captain had slept little before; now, as one may easily imagine, he slept less; and as the negro's flesh decreased day by day, his apprehensions grew more unbearable. Every meal of this seemed to him a fresh step towards his destruction.

So matters went on miserably enough till the 28th or 29th of January, when the drunken mate again entered the cabin at the head of the six sailors, and told him how the negro had been entirely eaten up some days back, and that as no vessel had appeared to give them even a glimmer of hope, it was necessary to cast lots again, as it was at all events better to die separately than all together.

"You are now hungry," the men said, "and will take your chance with us, as you did before when things looked better."

Again the captain warmly urged them to desist. He argued that killing the black had been of no use, for they were as greedy and emaciated as ever. He therefore urged them to submit patiently to the dispensations of Providence, and offered to pray with them for immediate relief or immediate death. The men sullenly replied that when they were hungry was no time to cant or pray; they must have something to eat, and if he did not instantly consent

to cast lots they would at once cast lots without him.

"Finding them thus inflexible," writes the captain, "and having but too much reason to suspect some foul proceedings unless I became a principal agent in the affair, I made a shift to rise up in my bed, ordered pen, ink, and paper, and called them all into the cabin. There were seven of us now left, and the lots were drawn in the same manner as the tickets are drawn for a lottery at Guildhall. The lot, indeed, did not fall on me, but on one David Flatt, a foremast-man, the only man in the ship on whom I could place any reliance. The shock of the decision was great, and the preparations for execution were dreadful. The fire already blazed in the steerage, and everything was prepared for sacrificing the wretched victim immediately. A profound silence for some time took possession of the whole company, and would possibly have continued longer had not the unhappy victim himself, who appeared quite resigned, delivered himself to the following effect: 'My dear friends, messmates, and fellow-sufferers, all I have to beg of you is to despatch me as soon as you did the negro, and to put me to as little torture as you can.' Then, turning to one James Doud (the man who shot the negro), 'It is my desire,' says he, 'that you should shoot me.' Doud readily yet reluctantly assented. The unhappy victim then begged a small time to prepare himself for death; to which his companions very cheerfully agreed, and even seemed at last unwilling to insist upon his forfeited life, as he was greatly respected by the whole ship's company. A few draughts of wine, however, soon suppressed these dawning of humanity; nevertheless, to show their regard, they consented to let him live till eleven the next morning, in hopes that the Divine goodness would, in the mean time, raise up some other source of relief. At the same time they begged of me to read prayers, promising to join me with the utmost fervency. I was greatly pleased with this notion, and though but little able to go through a task of that kind, I exerted all my strength, and had the satisfaction to observe that they behaved with tolerable decency."

As Captain Harrison lay down, faint with reading and prostrate with despair, he could hear the whole ship's company talking to poor Flatt, hoping that God would interpose for him, promising, though they never could catch a fish, they would drop some hooks over the side at daybreak, to give

their old messmate one chance more. Flatt, however, in spite of this reassurance, grew stone deaf about midnight, and delirious about four in the morning. The men then debated whether it would not be greater humanity to despatch him at once, but the majority agreeing to spare him, as they had promised, till eleven in the next forenoon, they all retired to their hammocks, except the sentinel, whom they always kept up to watch the fire.

About eight the next morning, as Captain Harrison was in his cabin pondering over the fate of poor Flatt, who had now but three hours to live, two sailors rushed down into the cabin, and, without saying a word, seized his hands. The captain at once concluded that the crew, afraid of eating the flesh of a madman, had resolved on sacrificing him. Disengaging himself, therefore, Harrison snatched up his pistols, resolved to sell his life as dearly as he could. The men at once cried out that they had seen a sail to the leeward—a large vessel, and standing in a fair direction. The rest of the crew soon after came down, and said that there was a sail, but that she seemed to be bearing off in quite a contrary course.

The captain was at first so overcome with joy that he could with difficulty give the orders to make signals of distress. The men, once more obedient, leaped about, and soon after began to cry out, "She nighs us! she nighs us! She's standing this way!"

As the ship grew nearer, the sailors tried to reassure Flatt, but his mind was gone, and he could not understand that his life was now safe. They then began to pass round the can, till the captain had convinced them that the ship might refuse to take them on board if they were found drunk. This sobered them, but the mate refused to listen to any argument, and brutally drank on.

"After continuing for a considerable time," says Harrison, "eagerly observing the progress of the vessel, and undergoing the most tumultuous agitation that could be created by so trying a suspense, we had at last the happiness to see a boat drop astern, and row towards us fully manned, with a very vigorous despatch. It was now quite a calm, yet the impatience with which we expected the arrival of the boat was incredible; the numberless disappointments we had met in the course of our unfortunate voyage filled us with an apprehension that some new accident might frustrate all our hopes, and plunge us again

into an aggravated distress. Life and death seemed, indeed, to sit upon every stroke of the oar; and as we still considered ourselves tottering on the very verge of eternity, the conflict between our wishes and our fears may be easily supposed by a reader of imagination. The boat at length came alongside; but our appearance was so ghastly that the men rested upon their oars, and, with looks of inconceivable astonishment, demanded what we were. Having satisfied them on this point, they immediately came on board, and begged we would use the utmost expedition in quitting our miserable wreck, lest they should be overtaken by a gale before they were able to recover their ship. At the same time, seeing me totally incapable of getting into the boat without assistance, they provided ropes, by which I was quickly let down, and my people followed me—I need not, I believe, observe, with all the alacrity they possessed.”

The drunken mate, almost forgotten, came to the gunwale at the last moment, astonished at the boat and the strange sailors. The sight of Harrison's men, with their hollow eyes, shrivelled cheeks, long beards, and squalid complexions, made the captain absolutely tremble with horror as he led Harrison politely down to his cabin, thanking God for being made the instrument of his deliverance. The rescuing ship proved to be the *Susanna*, bound to London from Virginia, Thomas Evers, captain. She, too, had had a battle with “a hard gale of wind,” and a heavy sea, that at one fell swoop had licked off four hogs, five butts of fresh water, fifty fowls, twenty or thirty geese and turkeys, and the caboose and copper. With seven fresh hands on board, and a long series of foul weather, a head wind, and a leaky vessel, he had to limit the crew to two and a half pounds of bread per week, and a quart of water and half a pound of salt provisions a day to each man.

Harrison, that brave Englishman, who tells his dreadful story with such unaffected piety and naïve simplicity, was three or four days on board before he felt any inclination to do anything but calmly sleep. The fourth day he sipped a little sago, but seemed to have lost all sense of taste. The next day he took some chicken-broth, and began to enjoy food. Soon after this, though unable to face the wind, he could crawl on deck, and the air gave him strength. A surfeit of roast turkey, however, throwing him into a fever, Captain Evers, who acted as his kind physician and nurse, restricted him in food. Though

sadly wanting provisions, the *Susanna* sighted no vessel at all except a Frenchman, from Cape François, as badly off as themselves. Nevertheless, about the 1st or 2nd of March they reached the Land's End safely, and took a pilot off Dartmouth, who guided the long-tormented sloop into the quiet Devonshire harbour, where the sufferers were treated with generous kindness. Next day the wretched mate died, and his watch and trinkets were sold to pay for his funeral. Two others of the sailors also died. Poor Platt still continued out of his senses. Of the six men rescued, only two were strong enough to do any duty.

On arriving in London on the 1st of April, 1760, Captain Harrison, who was insured at New York, lodged a protest in order to secure an indemnity to his owners. The declaration was signed by Robert Shank, “notary and tabellion public,” and sworn to “upon the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God,” by the captain and a passenger of the *Susanna*, before the Right Honourable George Nelson, Esquire, then lord mayor. He also published a short narrative of his sufferings and starvation for two and forty days, to show the “impiety of despair,” at Harrison's, “opposite Stationers' Hall, Ludgate-street.” In the last page, this brave, steadfast fellow, who, like the sailor in Horace, “mox reficit rates,” says, “I am now returning to New York, in the ship Hope, Captain Benjamin Davis, where I shortly trust the goodness which I have already experienced at the hand of Providence will be crowned by a joyful meeting of my wife and family.”

When Lord Byron was taunted with having taken his wreck in *Don Juan* from that of the *Juno*, already given in an early number of this series, he told a friend that he had drawn it from many such narratives, which he named. Among those which he mentioned, the *Melancholy Narrative of the Distressful Voyage and Miraculous Deliverance of Captain David Harrison, of the American Sloop Peggy*, occupies a very prominent place.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “HESTER'S HISTORY.”

CHAPTER XXXVII. MAY IS BIDDEN TO AN ENTERTAINMENT.

WHEN morning dawned, Bid went into her own little house and stripped the walls of the pictures which had lent them such splendour, carrying with these her chair, table, stool, and basket all to the cave which

held the possessions of her cherished friends. "Sell them wid the rest," she said, "for Bid will be Bid the thraveller to the end o' her days." It was not without a sigh that the old creature thus put out of mind her last earthly dream; but so many earthly dreams had faded from her, that one more seemed easy to forget. Having emptied the cabin, she left the door standing open, so that Simon, or the winds, or the foxes might take possession when they pleased.

Early in the day Simon arrived with some stout ruffians ready for any mischief. It was a very great labour for the old man to climb the hills, but his duty was before him, and he accomplished it. He did not find much trouble in doing the work after all, and he perceived with bitter regret that he could have easily done it alone without the expense of assistants. The people walked out quietly with their bundles in their hands, having already suffered the worst of the evil that had been thrust upon them. They had wept out the blaze of their hearthstones; they had broken their household gods with their own hands; there was only now to pass for the last time across the familiar threshold. In one house indeed there was found a little difficulty; for Simon on pushing into it came face to face with a corpse; the body of the poor consumptive girl, who had died of fear in her mother's arms. Simon retreated in horror before the sight of death; and this house was left in peace.

The woman who could not move was lifted, bed and all, and placed on the hill. Later, friends took her on their shoulders and carried her down the mountain to Miss Martha's barn, where a snug little chamber had been cleared for her in the straw. Her eldest daughter stayed by to take care of her, and the other children were settled among the farmers in the neighbourhood by May, who was now moving about. So this family was disposed of till the father, who was in England, could contrive to find money enough to bring them across the sea.

Miss Martha gave a lodging to many other tired souls that night. In the dusk of the summer evening the partings took place. There was wild wringing of hands and weeping and embracing, for friends gathered from many parts to say good-bye to the wanderers. The band of sad travellers passed away down the road and disappeared like the shadows in a dream. They sang a wild "keen" in chorus as they went, and the shrill note of sorrow hung long and vibrated in the still air. Faintly

and more faintly it echoed in the night, the mountains replying to it as long as they could hear. Then silence and darkness settled down upon the moors, and Simon's work was done. The shepherds and the cattle might come to the mountains when they pleased.

News had come over the hills of great doings at Camlough. It was quite a year since there had been anything like an entertainment given at that place; but the whispers of debt and difficulty which had been multiplying like cobwebs over Sir John's fair fame for hospitality were now to be blown away upon the breath of much dissipation; and Camlough was to witness scenes such as the hills had never dreamed of. Guests were coming from England, the castle was filling rapidly, and a series of entertainments had been devised. In this way were the Archbolds carrying out the doctor's prescription. They were providing amusement for the heir of Tobereevil; and they were bent upon doing it well.

The first piece of gaiety was to be a fancy ball, and guests were invited to it for a hundred miles round. It was a rare idea of Katherine's to send May an invitation. Miss Martha was not invited; nor was May asked to stay longer than just while the ball lasted. No carriage, no escort, no chaperone, no dress! Katherine smiled as she sealed the missive which was meant to make May weep.

It was a sultry evening towards the end of July; the sun had gone down, but the crests of the mountains were still at a red heat. Crimson and yellow were still throbbing in the air, and the woods looked hot and dusty, for the dew had not as yet begun to fall. The garden paths were baked, the roses hung their heads, and May knelt on the ground tying up the rose-trees, and gathering their fallen leaves. The sky made a wall of flame at the back of the Golden Mountain, and May's thoughts were beyond the mountain, and seemed to scorch themselves in the flame. A servant in livery rode up to the gate, and Bridget came down the garden with a note for her young mistress.

May read the note, and as she did so the blood rushed to her cheeks and forehead, till her eyes ached with the heat, and refused to read any more. Then the flush ebbed away again, and she walked into the house as white as a ghost.

"Aunty," she said, "look at this. I am going out for a walk." And before Miss Martha's spectacles were fairly set on her

nose, May was several perches across the heather.

Lines of shadow were tracking out the hollows of the moor, and there were brazen lines beside them. May seemed walking all the way through wreaths of fire, but she noticed nothing of that, having fire within her heart. Castles were burned to cinders in the sky, crags quivered in flames, and were left charred and spectral. The fires were vanquished at last; twilight came, and a veil crept over the brazen brow of the woods. Fevered nature drank the dew, and slept. It was quite dark when May came in from her walk. The fires then were also quenched in her heart; but a daring thought had been moulded into purpose while they burned.

In the morning she had written a note, and burned another before her aunt appeared.

"I thank you, Katherine Archbold, for giving me an idea," she said, solemnly, as she tore the pretty letter, and burned it in little pieces.

"A wilful piece of impertinence," said Miss Martha, entering the room as May held the last fragment to her taper. "So plain that they did not want you when they never mentioned me. They might safely have paid the compliment, not fearing we should go. So plain that they did not want you."

"Very plain, indeed, Aunty. I shall take them by surprise."

"My dear," said Miss Martha, faintly, "what did you intend to say?"

"That I have accepted the invitation," said May. "And I mean to go."

Miss Martha dropped her hand which had been raised to grasp the teapot. She looked astonished, shocked; then pained and angry. For some moments she was speechless.

"My love," she said at last, "you are surely not yourself. You do not know what you are saying. You——"

"Do not say a word till you hear my plan," said May, quickly. "If I fail, you may talk to me in any way you please, or you may scold me if I succeed; but you must not hold me back; for, Aunty, this is the enterprise of my life."

"Tell me what you mean," said Miss Martha, with the air of a person whose mind is made up to the worst. Then May unfolded her plan, and her aunt, with many misgivings, was obliged to allow her to put it in practice.

May, having got her will, began to

follow it in curious fashion. She had first to consider about a costume in which she could appear at a fancy ball, and went about her duties with her mind set on queens and heroines, and especially on their wardrobes. She visited all Miss Martha's ancient stores, lumber-rooms, and closets, deep drawers, and seldom-opened chests, looking for possible treasures of colour and material, and hoping for an inspiration as she went along. There was little to be found that could suit her purpose till Miss Martha at last produced, a little reluctantly, some yards of carefully saved light-blue tabinet which had been part of her own mother's wedding finery; and upon this May seized at once with greedy hands.

"Give it to me," she said, earnestly; "indeed it could not be used for a more sacred purpose."

This fragment of the past, some old black velvet, and some clear-starched muslin, were the best that they could find to suit her purpose. A pair of long gold earrings, with a gold cross to match, presented to Miss Martha while she lived in Normandy, decided May as to the costume which she must assume. She must make the best attempt she could at the dress of a Norman peasant. Miss Martha gave help in designing the apparel; and by the aid of her aunt's memory, and the suggestions of an old water-colour drawing done in Miss Martha's governing days, May cut out the garments, and set to work. When Bid arrived from the mountain she was told that the young lady wanted her, and was taken into her chamber, where Miss May was stitching busily, and with plenty to say to Bid.

In one of Miss Martha's outhouses there stood an odd little vehicle which had been much used in its time, intended to be drawn by a mule, and called a waggon. It was covered with close curtains of a dark green stuff, and had a seat running round the interior supplied with hard green cushions. The floor was matted, and many people have travelled in a less comfortable equipage. On the night of the fête at Camlough this waggon stood in waiting under the thickset hedge at the lower end of the garden at Monasterlea, having found a hiding-place, since its driver wished to escape all observation from the road. There were many strollers abroad on this particular night who watched for a glimpse of the carriages that had been rolling past all the evening. It was now getting late, and the carriages had ceased appear-

ing. They had a long way to drive after they had passed by Monasterlea.

May had been tired that day, and had gone to bed early. Bridget had brought her some tea, and Miss Martha had given orders that she was not to be disturbed again that night. So the servants had gone to bed, and the place was very quiet, though about eight o'clock a young Norman peasant was standing in May's chamber trying, with shaking hands, to fix Miss Martha's long gold ear-rings into her ears. Her short blue quilted petticoat and bodice of black velvet, her shoes, white muslins, and ornaments were complete. Her hair was rolled away tightly under the tall white cap, her cheeks glowing with excitement, her eye flashing from place to place to see that nothing was forgotten. May had a trying time before her, and she was not going to turn coward, but rather to strain every nerve for the accomplishment of her enterprise. Now she was all ready, missal and beads in one hand, and a small black mask in the other. Miss Martha wrapped her closely in a long black cloak, and lastly embraced her; and the old lady was trembling like a thorn-bush on a windy day.

"My darling!" she said, "give it up even now. If anything were to happen to you!"

"Now, Aunt, who are you going to send to do me harm?"

"If only the servants were to find it out—how humiliating that would be."

"But you know the servants are not going to find it out. If there were any chance of this, I'd have done it before them all. We don't want it talked about, and that is the whole thing."

"Well, the day is past when I was mistress: you are your own mistress now. Go, in God's name, and may he hold you in his keeping."

A few minutes afterwards, May was seated close by Bid in the little waggon. Mrs. Kearney's eldest gossoon had taken the management of the mule; he touched her with his whip, and May's adventure began.

It was a hot, still night, and very dark, but the mule and the gossoon knew the road on the Golden Mountain. May kept back her curtains, except when the sound of coming wheels warned her of other travellers on the road. The world seemed a mass of ragged and confused shadows, with here and there a startled light flashing out of a hollow. The stars blinked

drowsily on the edge of the sombre mountains, as if they could scarcely keep their eyes open in the heat. The air was filled with the rich scent of hay, the sweets of many flowers, and of the dew-laden thyme and heath. The journey seemed to May like the whole length of a day and night; and yet the mule did her work bravely. When the travellers caught sight of Camlough, it was just one o'clock in the morning.

Below them in the hollow lay a fairy scene. The illuminated castle stood like a castle of light in the slope of the dark valley; and tents lay spread beneath it, which seemed also made of light. Many-coloured fires encircled the inner rows of the trees, and the foam-curves of the sea just glinted through the distance in the gleam of the late-rising moon. The waggon pulled up in the shelter of a little by-road which led off Sir John's great mountain-road, just above the gates which separated that great road from the drive to the castle. The mule was tied to a tree which hid the waggon, and the gossoon lay down beside him to doze in the grass; for Bid and May had left him, and disappeared behind the brae.

They threaded their way very cautiously at first through bushes and ferns, by little tangled paths that wandered down to the level lawns and gardens, pausing, at last, in one of those long beech-alleys which spread their mazes over part of the grounds. To-night these alleys were lighted with coloured lamps, and here and there a gaily-dressed pair enjoyed their privacy, sauntering together apart from the crowd upon the lawns.

"Now, God A'mighty purtect ye, honey!" said Bid, in a frightened whisper, as she removed May's dark wrappings, and beheld her standing trembling in her strange attire, and about to be left alone. "Ye'll know yer way back to the boren, avourneen. I'll wait for ye there, for 'fraid we might miss other."

May nodded, and bent back the branch of a tree with both her hands, and the next moment she found herself in the crowd.

For the first few moments she felt sick with fear, but she had not come there without first assuring herself that she had courage for the adventure. The privacy which was insured to her by the wearing of the mask, gave her a certain amount of confidence, and she kept where the crowd was thickest, so that she might not be ob-

served to be alone. A lady or gentleman near her might be presumed to be her protector by any one who took a thought upon the subject; and she felt that she must be safe while she kept her presence of mind.

It was a curious sight even to eyes that were accustomed to festive scenes. If May had ever been "out" in the world, even in the mildest sense of the word, had ever danced at a ball or mixed in any gay crowd, the present experience might not have been so wonderful to her; but after a life spent in solitudes, it was not unnatural that a scene like the present should take away her breath. After a time she controlled her wonder, and drifted along with the crowd, becoming a part of the pageant, which seemed to grow familiar to her, as if in some other life she had shared in it before. She had made acquaintance with such a picture between the leaves of some old romance, and presently she became aware of this truth, which gave a fantastic unreality to all that she heard and saw. This very unreality was an assistance to her enterprise, for she could not feel greatly frightened at people who only seemed part of a dream. She was half carried along by the crowd, her eyes not dazzled but charmed by the subdued colour and glitter of the figures moving along with and around her, her ears not troubled by noise, but soothed with happy murmurs and softened music. The large tents on the lawn were filled with flowers, and refreshment tables were spread in them, and people sat among the flowers, or came in and out at will. A band was playing somewhere, and there was dancing on the lawn; yet from the sounds that came from the castle, and by the flashing of brilliant figures past the open windows, one could see that this outdoor entertainment was only the lesser portion of a curiously splendid whole.

As the crowd shifted about May attached herself first to one group and then to another, and in this manner made her way half across the lawn. She scanned anxiously every face that was uncovered, and every masculine figure that came within reach of her eyes, expecting a change in Paul, yet not knowing what appearance the change might take. She found herself watching the movements of a quadrille, in which Haroun Alraschid was dancing with a gipsy; it was a gay fantastic picture, but Paul did not make part of it. She peered into the last tent, which she had left unsuspected; but there was no Paul anywhere as yet to be seen.

What if he were too ill to appear, and shut in some upper chamber of the castle. The thought was not to be entertained, but even in passing through her mind left a trail of horror behind it. She battled off the idea, and renewed her energies in the search. Might he not have escaped from the crowd, and be wandering in some of the dim alleys, or even down by the sea? She gazed towards these quiet places, but dared not venture near them till her search in the crowd had been thoroughly made.

Meanwhile, Paul and Katherine were dancing at this moment in the chief drawing-room of the castle, Katherine having kept her hand on Paul's arm ever since the first guests had made their appearance. May's acceptance of the invitation had caused her great amazement, and no little dread. A hundred times she told herself that it was utterly impossible the girl from Monasterlea could keep her word, yet had all the time a latent conviction that May meant what she had said, and an unacknowledged faith in her power of doing anything that she had deliberately undertaken. And then what change might be wrought in Paul by a sudden meeting with her? Would it bring back his memory all in a moment, and with it his love for May and dislike of herself? These thoughts were not good for Katherine, as she walked about with her hand on Paul's arm, making search through the rooms for May. As soon as she espied the unwelcome guest she would put Paul into safe keeping, and go off and dispose of May, for it must be the business of the night to keep the two apart. So her hand did not leave Paul's arm, and people pointed out Miss Archbold and her very singular lover. Now, while May hesitated outside the walls, uncertain whether to enter in at the door or peep through the windows, Katherine and Paul were dancing in a quadrille. Katherine was dressed like Marie Antoinette, in a robe of white satin, with her fair hair powdered and dressed high above her head, and one could hardly look away from her, she was so beautiful.

All this excitement had a singular effect on Paul. It had certainly driven away his stupid placidity, and his eyes had a wild brilliance. His movements in the dance were quite correct; he did what other people did; yet people watching him closely would say the man was out of his wits. Katherine watched him closely as they danced together; if he happened to turn

his head she turned her head also in the same direction, being not easy in her mind while he crossed the floor in the quadrille. She scarcely breathed freely when he passed out of the reach of her hand.

The reception rooms of the castle led one from another, and the windows came to the ground, and opened like so many doors. They were all flung wide now, with curtains of silk and lace meeting lightly within the opening. May passed along outside, looking through the windows into each room as she went; and she did this very cautiously, for fear of attracting notice to herself. So at last she caught sight of Paul; and Katherine in all her glory by his side. A great blow smote upon her heart, and her impulse was to turn at once and run away, to leave this false lover to a new love, new friends, and new magnificence. Was it not shame for her, May, to come here stealthily looking for him? Let her turn, and go home quickly, and leave these happy lovers to their dance.

But no; he was neither false nor happy, and she would not move an inch. He turned towards her suddenly, and it was not Paul's face, though the face of no other man. Oh, how had they been dealing with him that he had come to look like this? She saw plainly with her eyes the thing that Bid had described to her; Paul, and yet not Paul—a man whose mind was gone.

The dance over, Katherine took Paul's arm again, and moved with him towards May's lurking-place. May's eyes followed the pair, and Katherine looked even more proud and determined than usual. Her face was saying quite frankly that she had always had her way, and intended to have it always. She could break a hundred hearts to get her will. She had now laid aside all fear of seeing May's unwelcome face; it was past one o'clock; impossible that any guest should arrive at so late an hour, and she had taken note of every lady who had until now presented herself. So Katherine made up her mind to put this dread away from her. The rooms were very hot, and she wished for air, and stepped out of a window, still holding by Paul's arm. May, who was watching her movements, followed near as they crossed the lawn.

Katherine sauntered up and down for awhile, had some refreshment, spoke to everybody, and caused a little sensation wherever she went. She made the circuit of the whole lawn, while the poor little

Norman peasant who was following upon her footsteps began to feel her heart beat wildly, for the moon was already setting, and signs of approaching dawn were becoming visible in the heavens. True, it was still dark, but how long would the darkness last?

Katherine at last seated herself in a satisfied way upon a rustic bench under a tree; in a moment was surrounded by flatterers, and relinquished her hold of Paul, who remained standing by her side. People did not mind him much, but they paid eager court to her; one fanning her, another offering a smelling-bottle, and all expressing conviction that she was intolerably fatigued. Katherine yielded herself to the flattery and received the homage which was precious to her, and in her greediness over the feast she forgot her vigilance as to her charge. Paul was pushed a little here and a little there, and by degrees he became separated from her, and strayed, overlooked by the crowd, in the purposeless way now habitual to him. His look of excitement had passed away, his head had sunk on his breast, and he took no notice whatever of the scenes going on around him. May alone watched his movements, and after a time had the happiness of seeing him direct his steps towards those dim quiet alleys which had latterly become his accustomed haunt. He crept under the trees, and was alone in a dark walk walled by high hedges of beech.

He hesitated, as if uncertain where to go, and May's heart died within her as she saw that here was the opportunity which might never occur again. Would he go down towards the sea, or move upward towards the hills? While he wavered, the hum of merriment came swelling through the trees. May expected that at any moment figures might run through the bushes in search of Paul. Not yet—not yet; and meanwhile he walked up the alley which led to the woody hills. May waited then, just a very little longer, till the bushes and young trees had hidden him from the view of the possible seekers in the alley. Then she sprang on lightly and was at his side.

"Paul, Paul!" she said.

He stopped short suddenly.

"Who spoke?"

She put her hand lightly on his arm.

"It is May—it is I. This is my hand. Don't you know me?"

It was so dark here that he could not see her face; but her voice was enough for him.

"Know you?" he cried. "Of course I know you. Where have you been so long?—and I have been so wretched."

He had got her hand now.

"Where are we this moment?" he said. "I do not know—I cannot remember. Oh, God! I cannot remember."

"It doesn't matter about remembering," said May. "You have not been well, and this place is not good for you. I have come to fetch you away. You will not object to come with me?"

"What is not good for me?" said Paul. "And tell me where I have been. I cannot remember anything. My mind is all dark."

He spoke in a wailing tone, very terrible to hear from a man. It shook May's heart, but she only said, "Never mind—hold my hand, and let us keep close together!" He obeyed her readily, and they plunged on through heather and furze-bushes, through trees and loose stones, up the rugged hills, getting every moment higher up into the air, and further removed from the castle lying glittering in the hollow. May trembled, thinking of her light dress, which she feared might attract attention, but she forgot that the merry-makers were surrounded by artificial lights, and their eyes too bedazzled to be caught by a speck of white up on the distant heights.

The fugitives pushed on together towards the rugged part of the hills, climbing slippery rocks and threading mazes of furze. Paul in his helplessness clung to the hand that dragged him on. He knew it was May's hand, and that May was beside him; her voice had aroused him so far as to feel that a great affliction had come upon him, that he had quite lost his memory and powers of thought; but every idea fled away from him as quickly as it was grasped, except that May had long been lost to him, and that he had found and was trying to hold her. The shimmering castle, the fire-wreathed trees, and the tents of light, all danced and shifted very far below them now as they sped along; looking like sparks in burnt-out ashes when the children cry, "Look at the soldiers marching!" By-and-bye the clouds broke up suddenly, and the sky became of a chill and pallid grey. Stones, furze-bushes, and

thorn-trees were to be seen peeping out from the darkness with an ashen look, as of fear upon them. But then May and Paul had reached the road and found their friends ready in waiting for them. They seated themselves, one at each side of Bid, in the vehicle behind the tree; the curtains were closely drawn, the gosssoon cracked his whip, and Miss Martha's little waggon set off on its journey home.

The mule trotted well; yet many a time before the journey was over had the waggon to get under a hedge, so that fine carriages might pass it on their way from the ball. The midsummer morning grew rosy above their heads, birds sang blithely, and the peasants whistled and lilted as they went to their work; but the travellers did not enjoy these pleasant signs of life, and would sooner it had been dark till home was reached. May sat in the corner of the waggon, holding Bid's arm, while Paul slept like a child with some straw supporting his head; and in his sleep the marks of a change were very visible upon his face.

Bid saw them as well as May, but she pretended not to think much of them. "He'll be Paul Finiston yet," she said, "in spite o' the devil."

It was about twelve o'clock in the day when the waggon was guided into another by-road, and Paul and May got out to walk to Monasterlea, which was only a mile away. May had stifled her heartache, and talked her old merry clatter as they strolled along through the daisies. Paul heard her with delight, and held her hand fast on his arm; but he did not know where they had come from; nor did he remember anything that had happened. Miss Martha saw them approaching; and so also did Nanny, who was getting vegetables in the kitchen garden.

"Musha, thin," said Nanny, returning to the house, "what for did you tell me Miss May was in her bed? She's comin' down the road wid Misther Paul; an' the hood o' her cloak turned over her head."

"Well!" said Bridget, "I could ha' sworn she didn't lave her room to-day. An' so she met wid Misther Paul. God sees it's nearly time he took a thought o' comin' back to us!"

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